



Approved For Release 2007/06/18 : CIA-RDP79T00975A030900010126-9

Director of
Central
Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily (Cable)

16 December 1978

State Dept review
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DIA review(s)

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CG NIDC 78-0292C

16 December 1978

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IRAN: Situation Report

//Prime Minister Azhari's apparent determination to break the strikes plaguing Iran may presage another test of strength between the government and the opposition next week.// [redacted]

Azhari yesterday ordered all ministries and government agencies to dismiss any employee not performing his job and said strikers will no longer be paid while they are absent from work. He also ordered an end to all demonstrations, either anti- or pro-Shah. [redacted]

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Ayatollah Khomeini, meanwhile, has appealed to Iranians to stop paying taxes and continue to strike until the Shah is ousted. The opposition National Front specifically called for a national strike on Monday to protest the killing of demonstrators during the past week. [redacted]

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//The chance for violence next week has been enhanced by increased militancy among armed forces officers. Many of them have been chafing under the restrictions imposed by the Shah on their enforcement of law and order and under the agreement worked out between the government and the opposition. In several cities, the military has been going out of its way to harass anti-Shah demonstrators and has encouraged pro-Shah crowds to attack the opposition.// [redacted]

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There are continuing reports of unrest within the armed forces, and several incidents have occurred--such as the sabotage of 40 F-5 airplanes and the shootout at a military base, both recently reported in the press. For the most part, however, the military remains at this time predominantly pro-Shah, and many officers seem to be spoiling for a fight with the opposition. [redacted]

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//Opposition leaders, for their part, are seriously concerned about the military's attitude. One leader has protested to US Embassy officers the military's behavior in several towns, especially Esfahan. National Front leader Karim Sanjabi has reportedly asked the Shah to control the Army and prevent bloodshed.// [redacted]

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NAMIBIA: Election Returns

The South African Administrator General in Namibia announced late yesterday that the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance--the political grouping that South Africa favors--won 80 percent of the votes in the election last week for a Namibian constituent assembly. South African Prime Minister Botha apparently intends to urge the Namibian assembly next week to agree to a second election under UN auspices, provided that the UN transitional plan is modified to meet unspecified South African caveats.

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In accordance with South Africa's plan for proportional representation, the Administrator General has assigned 41 of the 50 assembly seats to the Turnhalle Alliance and apportioned the remaining seats among the four independent parties that participated in the election. Three of these parties are predominantly white; most of the predominantly nonwhite parties boycotted the election because it took place without UN sanction. The Administrator General plans to convene the assembly next week, as soon as the parties that won assembly seats designate their representatives.

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South Africa has not specified its demands for modifications in the Security Council's transitional program, but it has asserted publicly that the projected UN military force of 7,500 must be reduced, that troops from any Communist country are unacceptable, and that a UN-sponsored election must be definitely scheduled, instead of being contingent on South African troops withdrawals.

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Although Botha probably intends to ask the Namibian assembly to agree in principle to the election, he is also likely to press for hardline resolutions concerning the UN military force and other transitional arrangements. Several prominent nonwhite members of the Turnhalle Alliance as well as Dirk Mudge, its principal leader, have suggested to Western diplomats that Botha expects to find it easier to use the assembly as a sounding board for his own position because of the large turnout at the polls last week--81 percent of all registered voters. Alliance leaders apparently are confident that they can win a second election, even if the South-West Africa People's Organization decides to participate.

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Earlier this week, SWAPO President Sam Nujoma said his group will participate in an election conducted according to the present UN transitional plan. SWAPO, however, probably would reject any significant modifications of the plan. [REDACTED]

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LEBANON: Attack on Maronite Leaders

The cease-fire in Beirut is holding despite an attack Thursday night by leftist Muslim militiamen on three Christian Maronite leaders. Some Maronites want to use the incident to argue that Muslim extremists should be isolated politically, but others may push for military retaliation. The episode has also raised doubts about Saudi Arabia's willingness to keep troops in Lebanon as part of the Arab Deterrent Force; the Christians were visiting a hospitalized Saudi diplomat when the attack occurred.

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The leftist militiamen surrounded American University Hospital in an attempt to capture Dany Shamun, militia chief of the National Liberal Party, and two Phalange leaders. The three Maronites were visiting Saudi Ambassador Ali Shair, who was wounded last week when Maronite militiamen fired on his helicopter. The Maronite leaders had come to assure Shair that the attack on him was a mistake and that those responsible would be turned over to government authorities for trial.

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The leftist gunmen exchanged fire for several hours with Saudi troops and Lebanese policemen who were providing security for the Maronites. Syrian troops and those of the Palestine Liberation Organization finally escorted the Maronite leaders safely back to East Beirut, after the intervention of President Sarkis, Syrian President Assad, Saudi Crown Prince Fahd, PLO Chairman Arafat, and Walid Jumblatt, a leftist Druze leader.

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Dany Shamun, one of the relatively moderate Maronite leaders, hopes to prevent a rise in animosity between the Christian and the Muslim communities as a result of the incident. Hardline Maronites will probably be less conciliatory, however, and urge armed retaliation.

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The Saudi Ambassador was angered by the attack, which he said demonstrated the futility of trying to solve Lebanon's problems. He said he intends to recommend the withdrawal of all Saudi troops and Embassy personnel. A Saudi withdrawal, although unlikely, would have serious consequences for Lebanese security. The use of Saudi troops at flashpoints in East Beirut, and Shair's personal mediation efforts, have played a key role in maintaining the cease-fire.

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BELGIUM: Parliamentary Election

Belgian voters go to the polls tomorrow to choose a government whose major job will be to devise a devolution plan acceptable to the country's Flemish and Walloon communities. Decisions on other pressing issues--economic and defense--will probably be delayed until some progress is made on resolving the communities problem. Formation of a new government may take several months; the major stumbling block will be the choice of a prime minister.

Political leaders are far more interested than the electorate in devolution. Regionalization placed fifth as a pressing national issue in a recent poll, well behind economic and social issues. The next government's first order of business, however, will be to address two questions: whether devolution is indeed a desirable goal, and whether the Egmont-Stuyvenberg accords--a blueprint for a devolved Belgium drawn up last winter--is the best means for accomplishing it.

The main sticking points in any devolution plan will be protecting the Flemish-speaking minority in Brussels if the capital devolves as a separate region and protecting the French-speaking minority in the Flemish villages around Brussels, which the Flemings want to keep under their control.

The election will probably not result in any major shifts in party strength. The Flemish Social Christian party will probably receive more votes than any other party. In combination with its French counterparts, this party has dominated Belgian politics in recent years. The Socialists, the second strongest party, may lose votes because of their recent formal split along community lines.

The next prime minister will probably be a Social Christian. Despite outgoing Prime Minister Tindemans' personal popularity, he has lost much credibility as a leader among his former coalition partners and, to a lesser extent, in his own party. Minister of Defense Vanden Boeynants, who performed well as head of the interim government, and Social Christian president Martens are other possible candidates.

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THAILAND-LAOS: Diplomatic Relations

A Thai patrol boat on the Mekong River, which runs between Thailand and Laos, was fired on and subsequently seized by Lao soldiers yesterday. This is the second such incident in the past few days, although the attacks occurred at different locations. The Lao assaults are a jarring interruption of the generally peaceful conditions that have existed along the river during the past year and come just days before a scheduled visit to Laos by Thailand's Prime Minister Kriangsak.

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This will be the first visit to Laos by a Thai prime minister while in office and reflects growing cordiality between the two countries.

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Relatively minor incidents have occurred periodically along the river over the past year, usually involving brief exchanges of fire by Lao and Thai soldiers from opposite banks or firing by Lao soldiers on refugees and smugglers crossing the river to Thailand. Both sides have made efforts, however, to minimize the reverberations of such clashes and have worked quietly in diplomatic channels to reduce their problems along the border.

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These latest incidents will test Thai patience but, unless such assaults on this scale continue, they will probably not deter Kriangsak from his ambitious diplomatic campaign.

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UK: European Monetary System

//Prime Minister Jack Lynch announced yesterday that Ireland will join the European Monetary System on 1 January. The Irish had been holding back because they were dissatisfied with the amount of financial assistance their EC partners offered them at the Community summit on 4 and 5 December. Since then, West Germany and other EC members have promised Ireland additional aid on a bilateral basis.// [redacted]

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//With the Irish decision to join, the UK--Ireland's principal trading partner--is the only EC country to remain outside the European Monetary System. Dublin decided only after much debate to risk the potential adverse consequences of breaking the historic link between the Irish pound and the pound sterling. Lynch hopes Britain's publicly stated intent to follow a stable exchange rate policy will mean that, in practice, the two currencies can remain on a parity with each other.// [redacted]

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//Norway and Sweden--both candidates for associate membership in the European Monetary System--have decided against joining. Neither precludes going in at some later date, but both believe they can best maintain exchange rate stability by pegging their currencies to currency baskets representing their most important trading partners. Similarly, Austria sees few benefits from associating with the European Monetary System at this time.// [redacted]

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ZAIRE: Status of African Force

Zaire's major Western supporters met on Wednesday in Paris to discuss the status of the Inter-African Force in Zaire's Shaba Region. No new assistance was pledged for the force, and the meeting apparently ended inconclusively. If additional funds cannot be found to maintain the force, the Senegalese--and probably the Moroccans--will withdraw their contingents. [REDACTED]

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All parties agreed that the force should remain in Shaba for at least another six months, which the French estimate will cost approximately \$10 million, and that a phased withdrawal would be preferable to an abrupt disengagement. [REDACTED]

Belgium and France are particularly concerned that the departure of the troops would result in the flight of foreign technicians who help run Shaba's vital mining complexes, and there are persistent rumors that anti-Mobutu rebels in the Angola-Zambia border region might be tempted to return should the force depart. The Zairian Army also would probably revert to its usual undisciplined behavior. [REDACTED]

Despite these concerns, the Paris meeting did not reach agreement on how the force could be supported. Contributions from Belgium and France have been extremely small, and both believe that the US has at least a "moral commitment" to assist with the cost of the force. The French Director for Africa recently said that French President Giscard intends to raise this point with President Carter when they meet in Guadeloupe early next month. [REDACTED]

During the Paris discussions, it was disclosed that Saudi Arabia had provided \$25 million to the French to purchase arms and equipment for the Moroccan contingent. Although Morocco has not indicated its intentions, rumors that it will soon withdraw its contingent are widespread. [REDACTED]

Senegal cites several reasons for wanting to remove its troops, but the major reason is financial. Although Paris has now decided to give the Senegalese about \$5

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million or \$6 million, this will not be enough. The Senegalese have agreed, however, only to rotate their troops--not to withdraw them--if they are adequately compensated. They have been deeply disappointed over the US refusal to airlift departing Senegalese troops. 25X1

The Moroccan and the Senegalese contingents of 1,500 and 600 troops respectively comprise more than 80 percent of the Inter-African Force and, without them, the force would virtually cease to exist. 25X1

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FEATURE ARTICLE

USSR-CHINA: Weather Modification

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//The USSR and China, the two most active countries in weather modification research, are planning significant increases in their programs. Both have begun research that may lead to attempted modification of major storms, such as typhoons--experiments previously conducted only by the US. The quality of the Soviet research is excellent, but that of China is difficult to judge because reported results have not been substantiated. Computer support for meteorological programs has been deficient in both countries and is the focus of considerable attention.// [redacted]

25X1 //The Soviet program began in the early 1950s and is now several times larger in funding and personnel than the US civilian and military weather modification research programs combined. It is broad in scope and very competently staffed. Its expansion and improvement are likely to accelerate because the Hydrometeorological Service was upgraded to state committee status in March 1978.// [redacted]

//The first Chinese weather modification experimenting took place in the late 1950s and had become extensive by the 1970s. China recently established a new academy that includes the world's first known institute devoted solely to research on artificial weather changes, thus adding to other indications that the Chinese plan a significantly larger, more centralized, and more scientifically based program.// [redacted]

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//In its early years, the Soviet program first concentrated on clearing fog and clouds from airports and then on hail suppression. The Soviets are currently exploring such areas as precipitation enhancement, thunderstorm dissipation, and lightning suppression.// [redacted]

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//What is probably the largest Soviet project is intended to raise the level of Lake Sevan in Armenia by increasing rainfall over the watershed. In addition to

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standard cloud-seeding techniques, the Soviets will employ a novel device called a meteotron, which uses several jet engines to create convection currents that carry moisture upward, creating clouds.// [REDACTED]

//Experimental design and instrumentation appear to be the weakest areas of the Soviet program and probably will receive the greatest additional emphasis. The employment of better statistical methods to devise experiments and analyze the results would help alleviate the experimental design problem and improve verification techniques. The planned purchase of Western equipment, along with a recent trend toward improved Soviet-designed instruments, will help solve the instrumentation problem.// [REDACTED]

//In recent years, the Soviets have begun an intensive study of typhoons, and they may be seriously considering a typhoon-modification project similar to the US Project Stormfury, which was aimed at altering hurricanes in the Atlantic. This is the only major weather modification area in which the Soviets have not been active.// [REDACTED]

//Typhoons are not a major threat to the USSR, but research on the modification of these storms is of high current interest in weather modification research and development, and this probably explains the Soviet interest. If the Soviets initiate a typhoon modification project in the Pacific, they probably will encounter some opposition from surrounding countries, just as the US did when discussions were under way to move Project Stormfury to the Pacific.// [REDACTED]

//China's new weather modification research institute will be one of several comprising the new Academy of Meteorological Sciences, which was established following a recent national conference on weather modification. The conference developed a research program extending to 1985 for rainmaking, hail cloud and fog dispersal, and typhoon moderation.// [REDACTED]


//Research on typhoon modification may have been supported by ships collecting data in the Pacific. To support weather modification research, the new institute will have a modern cloud and fog physics laboratory. Such research has previously been conducted at a variety of institutes, some under military control.// [REDACTED]

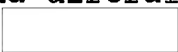
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[REDACTED]

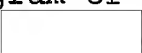
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25X1 //Several Chinese experiments in weather modification took place in the late 1950s and 1960s but were limited mostly to efforts to improve weather conditions unfavorable for agriculture. During the 1970s, Chinese reports indicate that a variety of field experiments involving several million individuals took place throughout the country.// 

//Most of these experiments have been attempts to control or moderate drought and hail conditions using fireworks, crude rockets, cannon, networks of antiaircraft artillery, and aircraft, including radio-controlled model airplanes.// 

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25X1 //Chinese military aircraft and ground units have often taken part in field weather experiments in agricultural regions. The country's National Defense Scientific and Technical Commission reportedly took over the control and funding of all weather modification research in 1969 and has a program of research at several military weather institutes.// 

25X1 //The Chinese have claimed significant successes in modifying the weather, but they have published no supporting data and there has been no verification by non-Chinese experts. There has probably in fact been little precise scientific control or monitoring of the Chinese experiments. It appears that China now plans a more scientific approach with improved seeding and test devices.//


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LATE ITEM

ARGENTINA-CHILE: Beagle Channel

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[redacted] an Argentine warship fleet is in the disputed Beagle Channel area suggest that an Argentine move against one or more of the islands is imminent.// [redacted]

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//The US defense attache in Santiago reports that the Chileans yesterday identified eight Argentine surface ships--one aircraft carrier, one cruiser, five destroyers, and an oiler--approximately 100 nautical miles east of Nueva Island in the Beagle Channel. They are expected to arrive in the area of Evout and Barnevelt Islands some time today.// [redacted]

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//These ship movements are consistent with previous reporting regarding Argentine contingency planning for a military initiative. We do not know, however, if the Argentine Government has given the order to commence action or if the fleet is merely positioning itself in the staging area.// [redacted]

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//If Argentina decides to occupy an island or islet, we expect that its fleet will take up blocking and support positions between the three disputed islands in the Beagle Channel--Nueva, Picton, and Lennox--and the Barnevelt and Evout Islands and conduct a heliborne landing on Barnevelt and Evout. The latter action is well within the capabilities of the Argentine forces.// [redacted]

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